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Classified By: political counselor jeffrey delaurentis for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) Following recent consultations on UNAMI with senior UN officials, including U/SYG Pascoe, Special Representative de Mistura, and UNHCR New York Director Bertrand USUN has confirmed the following. On staffing, UNHCR has placed a senior professional staff member full-time in Baghdad, assigned a second professional who will re-locate to Baghdad shortly, and is planning to increase the number of full-time professional staff based in Iraq to a total of five. These assignments will be confirmed following a visit by UNHCR High Commissioner Guterres to Iraq, Syria and Jordan scheduled for February. UN headquarters has dismissed the argument that security-imposed restrictions on staffing prevent UNHCR or other UN agencies from assignment to Baghdad. On the new compound for UNAMI, the UN has also agreed to place a hold on its current plan in order to explore the viability of the "Georgian compound." On implementing UNAMI's expanded Security Council mandate, de Mistura confirmed he is seeking to start with "positive examples (of UN assistance) in soft areas" in order to win Iraqi backing to tackle more sensitive subjects, in particular regional engagement. He opined that "no one is totally serious" about regional dialogue. De Mistura defined UNAMI's immediate focus as support and assistance on boundary disputes, refugees/IDPs, provincial elections, and implementation of Iraq's Compact. The envoy also praised the Secretariat for its support to UNAMI, noting that Pascoe, as a former Ambassador, "understands how to support a running team."

Consultations in New York

[1](#)2. (C) Seeking to encourage UN efforts to satisfactorily fulfill the mandate of UNSC Resolution 1770, which expands the tasks assigned to the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Amb Khalilzad met January 17 with UN Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs Lynn Pascoe and his

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Iraq team and on January 21 with Special Representative Steffan de Mistura, who was in New York for the quarterly Security Council briefing on Iraq (septel). USUN also met January 25 with Pierre Bertrand the director of UNHCR's New York office, and UNHCR senior policy advisor Emmy Takahashi.

13. (C) In his meeting with Pascoe and six members of the UN's Iraq team, Amb Khalilzad pressed for details on how UNAMI is moving to fulfill its mandate and whether de Mistura had sufficient staff to carry it out. Amb Khalilzad asked specifically about reports that UNHCR said it could not assign staff to Iraq because of security-imposed restrictions on the number of employees. While noting the importance of security and consultation with Under Secretary-General for Security Veness, Pascoe and UN staffer Darko Mocibob dismissed these reports, explaining that UNAMI had sufficient hard cover to permit more professional staff. They also maintained that de Mistura is having good success in attracting UN staff to serve in Iraq. Turning to another outstanding issue, Mocibob said the UN had sufficient funds to reimburse the USG for airlift in theater for UNAMI travel while the UN sought to contract its own air support.

14. (C) Pascoe said that de Mistura reported he had excellent cooperation with Embassy Baghdad and MNF-I. He said de Mistura is planning to sequence implementation of the tasks outlined in UNSC Resolution 1770. Pascoe also confirmed that SYG Ban is serious about the UN effort in Iraq. "It's a big issue, it really counts, and he wants us to work on this."

Visiting de Mistura

15. (C) Following presentations by de Mistura and Amb Khalilzad to the Security Council January 21, the two met to discuss de Mistura's first two months in Iraq. Summarizing many of the issues de Mistura has discussed with Embassy Baghdad (ref b and previous), the UN envoy explained he is seeking "positive examples in soft areas," and described his work on Article 140. On regional engagement, de Mistura reported that Iraqi Foreign Minister Zebari had been sluggish in working with the UN to set up the ad hoc secretariat. The envoy opined that "no one is totally serious" about regional dialogue, and suggested each neighbor wanted its own bilateral deal. He said he would work to identify areas of

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genuine interest in order to promote engagement, and identified refugees as a possible area. He reported that he has dined twice with the Iranian ambassador. De Mistura also said he had worked with the GOI and Saudi Arabia on the following arrangement: the GOI will spend the amount of debt relief granted to Iraq by Saudi Arabi in Sunni Arab majority areas in Iraq.

16. (C) On national reconciliation, de Mistura said there could be no movement on constitutional reform until the major political issues of oil and federalism had been resolved. He reported that Iraqi NSA Mouffaq al-Rubaie had asked the UN to provide assistance to the GOI in negotiations with the USG on issues related to security, diplomacy, and economics. De Mistura suggested such UN advice to Rubaie "may be a good idea." On the new UNAMI compound, de Mistura credited a U.S. Army captain (unnamed), who had identified the Georgian compound as an alternative site that would be more cost-effective because it would be co-located in what will be a diplomatic compound. The UN subsequently advised USUN that de Mistura had successfully persuaded the Secretariat to put a hold on the current \$200 million proposal while the UN undertakes an assessment of the viability of the Georgian compound.

17. (C) On UNHCR staffing, de Mistura confirmed that he had arranged for High Commissioner Guterres to visit Iraq in February when Guterres travels to Jordan and Syria. De Mistura said he had requested that Guterres come with a "gift" of personnel for UNAMI, stated that he expected that Guterres would comply, and underscored the urgency of providing technical advice to the "weak" Ministry of Displacement and Migration. Generally speaking, de Mistura praised the Secretariat's support for UNAMI, singling out Pascoe. He asked Amb Khalilzad, however, to reinforce with

U/SYG for Security Veness the need to ensure the ceiling on staff does not block the assignment of UN personnel to Iraq prior to Veness' next trip to Iraq. De Mistura noted that the UN has a total of 355 employees in Iraq, including professional and security staff. At the Tamimi compound in Baghdad, there are 85 professional staff members, and he is seeking an additional 19 professional staff to be assigned there. He argued that it was important to "take away the alibi" that security restrictions limit assignments. He added that it was important for the Iraqis to see substantive international staff actively engaged in the country.

Pressing UNHCR New York

18. (C) USUN met January 29 with Pierre Bertrand the director of UNHCR's New York office, and UNHCR senior policy advisor Emmy Takahashi. Bertrand, noting that he and de Mistura are old friends, reported that UNHCR has already placed a senior representative in Baghdad and that a second substantive staffer would be re-locating to Baghdad shortly. He said UNHCR plans to place up to five professional staff in Iraq, including in Irbil and Basrah. He said Guterres would confirm these steps when he visited Iraq in February, when he is also touring Jordan and Syria.

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